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LABOUR ORGANISER

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DORKING C.L.P.—Applications are invited for the post of Assistant Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Commencing salary £450 per annum. Application forms, which must be returned not later than the 28th April, 1955, from Mr. W. Kelsey, Labour Party Office, Pethick-Lawrence House, 85 South Street, Dorking, Surrey.

HARBOROUGH (Leicestershire) C.L.P.—Applications are invited for the post of full-time Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from Mr. J. G. Everett, 65 Mere Road, Wigston, Leicestershire, to whom they should be returned not later than 30th April.

ETON AND SLOUGH C.L.P.—Experienced full-time Secretary-Agent required for this important Labour Constituency. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Application forms from: Mr. David Johns, 12 Carlisle Road, Slough, Bucks., to whom they must be returned not later than 26th April, 1955.

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THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

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APRIL, 1955

PRICE FIVEPENCE

Election Announcement Soon?

THE rumour that polling in the General Election will take place at the end of May is becoming stronger.

The Government would like to extract the last ounce of party advantage from the position which enables it to keep secret when the election will take place, but sometimes things get out of hand, as now appears to be happening, and uncertainty has to be ended by an official pronouncement.

A snap election is bad, not least because it denies the opposition parties a reasonable time to prepare their campaigns. Obviously there should be enough time for the main political parties to make known to the electorate their policies on the issues of the day. At best, however, we cannot hope to know definitely more than four or five weeks before when polling day will be, which is not a great deal of time when the many jobs that have to be done are considered.

Moreover, during the early part of May, parties throughout the country, with the exception of the County of London, will be engaged in the local elections. Though the result of some of the work done then can be preserved for use at the General Election, many of the workers will be thinking solely in terms of the local contests and there will be a tendency to ease up when they are over.

It is most important, therefore, that such preparations as can be made for the General Election shall be undertaken immediately, remembering all the time that the presentation of a candidate or his views, or the disparagement of some other candidate, will legally start the election, and this is to be avoided.

The county council election results are not a very good guide because Labour was defending so many seats and polls were very low, but they do point to the fact that election machinery can be the deciding feature in key marginal constituencies. Since this machinery cannot be constructed in a day, it is imperative that preparations should be made now!

Watch delivery of nominations

THE importance of observing the strict letter of the law in relation to election procedure was further emphasised in a case that came before the Lord Chief Justice and two other judges on Friday, 1st April. The case concerned the delivery of nomination papers for the Warnham electoral division of West Sussex.

The Notice of Election, published by the Deputy Returning Officer, stated that nomination papers must be delivered at 13 Greenfield Road, Slinfold, on any day after the date of the Notice of Election but not later than noon on Saturday, 19th March, 1955.

Shortly before the final time for nomination, papers were delivered to this address on behalf of a Mr. Ashdown, standing as a Labour Candidate. Enquiry was made as to whether nomination papers had been delivered for any other candidate, and information was given to the effect that there had not. Following the close of nomination, another visit was made and a statement obtained to the effect that no nomination papers had been delivered at that address for any other candidate.

Mr. Ashdown was concerned when informed that an election would be held. He contended that as his was the only nomination paper delivered, he should have been declared elected under Local Election Rule 13 (2), Second Schedule of the R.P.A. 1949.

Enquiries made at the offices of the County Returning Officer and the Deputy Returning Officer elicited the information that another nomination paper had been accepted by the Deputy Returning Officer and therefore an election would take place. It was as a result of this decision that action was taken.

The case made before the judges was to the effect that as only one valid nomination paper had been received at the place specified in the Notice of Election—as laid down by L.E.R. 8 (1) (b) of the R.P.A. and within the period laid down by Local Election Rule 1 (the election time-table) that Mr. Ashdown was the only nominee and should therefore be deemed to be elected in accordance with L.E.R. 46 (2).

This states that in the event of an uncontested election, the Returning Officer shall not later than 11 o'clock of the morning of the day of election, publish the name or the names of the persons elected.

It was contended by Counsel, on behalf of the County Returning Officer and the Deputy Returning Officer, that the important thing was ensuring that nomination papers were delivered in time but, when asked by the Lord Chief Justice if an affidavit could be produced stating that a nomination paper was in fact delivered in time and at the place specified in the Notice of Election, it was admitted that so far as time was concerned, an affidavit could be made but not in respect of the place.

The Lord Chief Justice ruled that the law was quite clear and that as Mr. Ashdown's nomination papers were the only papers delivered within the prescribed period at the place specified, he must be declared elected. The County R.O. will be notified accordingly and arrangements for the poll will therefore have to be cancelled.

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CANDIDATES

THE following were endorsed as prospective Parliamentary Candidates at the February meeting of the National Executive Committee:

West Derbyshire	Mr. R. B. Stirling
Wythenshawe ...	Mr. N. Atkinson
Tynemouth ...	Mr. J. Finegan
Salisbury	Mr. J. Papworth
South	
Worcestershire	Mr. E. L. J. Thorne
Wrexham	Mr. J. I. Jones
Glasgow,	
Kelvingrove	Mr. J. L. Williams

THE FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN RESELECTED AS A RESULT OF REDISTRIBUTION :

Wolverhampton	
North East	Mr. J. Baird
Nuneaton	Mr. F. G. Bowles
Birmingham,	
Stetchford	Mr. R. H. Jenkins
Dudley	Mr. G. E. C. Wigg
Glasgow Central	Mr. J. McInnes
Glasgow, Provan	Mr. W. Reid



CO-OPERATIVE CANDIDATES RUNNING IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE LABOUR PARTY

East Hertfordshire	Mr. W. S. Hilton
Liverpool,	
West Derby	Mr. C. R. Fenton

THE FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN RESELECTED AS A RESULT OF REDISTRIBUTION :

Glasgow, Govan ...	Mr. J. Rankin
--------------------	---------------



WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURES

Saffron Walden ...	Mr. M. Clynes
	Parker
St. Albans	Mr. J. McKnight
Leicester,	
South East	Mr. J. Johnson

An appreciation of good Government at local level ...

THE Cymmer Ward Labour Party of the Glynccorwg local Labour Party has earned warm congratulations.

Its annual report would do credit to a much larger organisation, and if its example were emulated there would be fewer complaints that ward meetings are wearying and badly attended.

In a letter to his members, which accompanied the annual meeting documents, the secretary writes, "Dreams will not bring victory to Labour."

The content of the annual report suggests that this ward has little time in which to daydream. Its success arises from the very nature of its brisk and realistic activities.

Sound business meetings, educational activities which use the resources of ward members, in addition to those of guest speakers, are only part of a healthy programme.

It would appear that the idealism of this ward arises from doing things together which are worth doing. A particularly striking feature of the report is the close relationship between the ward and its representatives on the local authority. This probably accounts for the stress in the report of the influence sound local government under Labour control, can have on national affairs.

There is a philosophical strain running through the report that an appreciation of good government at local level is the first step to a high standard of citizenship which through its understanding of the affairs near at hand will automatically demand sound government at national and international level. In order to ensure that all its members are well primed with the achievements of the local authority and the facilities offered to the electorate, the annual report is accompanied by a document giving details of the services offered in every field of local government work.

Well done, Cymmer Ward! It must be a pleasure to attend your meetings, and while there is ample opportunity for healthy criticism there will be little time or desire for disgruntlement.

A LESSON IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

MANY who are readers of the *Labour Organiser*, as well as many who are not, owe a great deal to the teaching of Harold Croft, whose lectures and letters have, over a long stretch of years, solved innumerable difficulties and inspired innumerable activities.

Perhaps the best tribute one can pay to Harold is to call attention to the new edition of his *Guide to Public Speaking* (Labour Party, 1s. 6d.). Even to those who do not know him, this book is important and likely to remain so. As Morgan Phillips says in his foreword, it "has always merited the highest praise".

The new edition is handier in size than the original, and has been largely revised. The many additions and the few omissions have, in my view, improved the text of what, even in its first form, was the best as well as the cheapest book on the subject.

There are other books which deal more elaborately, and in small details perhaps more elegantly, with the technique of public speaking. There is no other which is so completely practical or which confines itself so rigidly to essentials. Here is a book in which no word is wasted, in which the utterly ignorant can find exactly the enlightenment they need.

It is enlivened throughout by the prim gaiety which is characteristic of its author, carrying the suggestion that such gaiety should appear, however fugitively, in every speech. That in itself is a service to politics.

Harold Croft describes, for example, the simple method of preparing and delivering a chairman's speech. "Do not

be dismayed," he says, apropos of the speaker's notes, "do not be dismayed by the ordinariness of what you have set down; actually it is often the commonplace things which prove to be the best in a speech if said naturally . . ."

Which reminds me of the surprising effectiveness of the nervous chairman who said, "I have here two sheets of sausage paper containing the whole of my remarks," and, to the delight of the audience, finickingly tore up each sheet as he read it. That speech was at least brief.

Harold Croft might have stressed the

by Don Alger

importance of brevity in chairman's speeches. Despite centuries of admonition, most of them are still too long. The brief, pithy chairman is a rare gem.

But it is not merely to chairmen, whether pithy or otherwise, that *A Guide to Public Speaking* makes its appeal; it is, indeed, indispensable. All agents, secretaries, delegates and party officers generally who have to give reports to meetings and conferences will profit from a study of the book. Even the member of the party who occasionally takes part in a discussion should learn from it. For if Harold Croft's simple instructions are followed, all our speakers, however small their contributions to meetings, will have the satisfaction of speaking well, while their audiences will have the delight of hearing speeches attractively made.

Because of the improvement in the spirit of our discussions which this would make, if for no other reason, Harold Croft's precepts should be mastered by every active member of the party. At any time a member may wish to make a statement or be obliged to give a report. He can learn from the book how to do so pleasantly.

A Guide to Public Speaking covers with equal force the various kinds of indoor and out-of-door meetings; it deals with the composition of all types of speeches, with diction, with the use of the voice, the handling of questions and the conduct of arguments. It gives advice on reading and on the filing of notes.

Above all, it not only stresses the

importance of confidence: it creates confidence.

The quality of ease on the platform can only be obtained by having confidence that you are master of your speech and that the speech is not master of you.

And the book shows how, without impossible labour, the reader can become such a master. This is particularly clear in one of its briefest chapters—'Open Air Speaking'. The four principles and the attendant illustrations on these two-and-a-half pages give the final wisdom on what is still a vital means of propaganda.

Apart from its general argument, there can be few small books which contain so many curious facts, the significance of which has been either forgotten or never known. There are, for instance, the surprising ways in which a speaker may suddenly find help in answering difficult questions. And this, too, conveys a paradoxical truth which is rarely understood:

You have some knowledge, however elementary, of a number of things, and also some ideas, even though they may be simple. You will perceive that to put any of this knowledge and these ideas into some systematic order seems of itself to expand your knowledge and elaborate your ideas, and concurrently your powers of mind.

I would add another paradoxical truth, namely, that in the preparation of speeches nothing so readily causes a crop of fresh ideas to spring as the ruthless pruning of the existing crop. This is in accordance with the universal relation between the knife and the bloom.

Personally (to end on a lighter note concerning a book which is itself entertaining), I am glad to acknowledge two minor benefits I have received from Harold Croft's *Guide*. First, the knowledge that the puzzling word *mnemonics* is pronounced *ne-mon-ics*. This is a vast relief. Secondly, the fact that even humorous stories "lapse in the mind if not indexed in some form".

On which one would like to ask the author what happens to the stories which are positively not indexable. Perhaps these are what Peter Mackenzie had in mind when he said (as Harold Croft quotes in another connexion): "Praise the Lord, the words rush out of my mouth

before I have time to put their shirts on."

Here, finally, are some rules which seem to cover all the essentials of public speaking. They are based almost entirely on the teaching of *A Guide to Public Speaking*, which must be consulted for the exciting details:

- (1) Never address a meeting without preparation.
- (2) Read as widely as possible in the relevant papers and books on the subject of your speech.
- (3) If possible, get some information in advance about the kind of audience you have to address.
- (4) Always prepare a written script of your speech under a series of orderly headings. Give your speech a proper beginning (statement of the subject), middle (exposition of the subject) and end (summary of the whole speech).
- (5) Revise your script several times until you are sure it contains exactly what you wish to say.
- (6) If possible, have with you at the meeting merely notes and not a fully written speech.
- (7) With the notes as a guide, accustom yourself to find the right words for the speech as you go along. Your memory of your careful preparation will help enormously here. The result will be spontaneous and therefore attractive to the audience.
- (8) Accustom yourself to deep breathing because this helps in the control of your nerves. It is, moreover, essential to clear and articulate speech.
- (9) Practice reading aloud and accustom yourself to pronounce words distinctly.
- (10) Pitch your voice so that it will reach the people at the back of the meeting.
- (11) Do not speak rapidly. Within reason, the slower you speak the better the effect will be.
- (12) To occupy your hands, hold your notes. If you cannot do this, rest your hands lightly on a table or, in the absence of a table, clasp them lightly together in front of you. In any case, avoid a slovenly stance and a continual restlessness of the hands.
- (13) If you feel prompted to do so, make gestures to enforce your speech, but avoid repeating the same gesture too often.
- (14) If you forget for a moment what you are proposing to say, do not hesitate to stop completely. If with the aid of your notes you cannot recall the point

you were trying to make, ignore it and pass to another point. The audience will hardly notice the lapse.

- (15) If you are interrupted, you are not bound to reply. Ignore the interruption unless an apt reply springs to your mind. The chairman must protect the speaker from interrupters.
- (16) Unless you feel able to answer questions on a wide variety of subjects, get the chairman to announce that questions must be confined to the subject of your speech.
- (17) If you cannot fully answer a question, say so frankly and, if possible, add something you feel is relevant. If you deem it wise to do so, offer to get the required information for the questioner later.
- (18) Remember that it is one of the chairman's (not the speaker's) duties to keep order and to protect the speaker from improper treatment by the audience.
- (19) Remember that audiences are tolerant and in the main desire to help rather than hinder the speaker.
- (20) Remember that, so long as you are courteous and keep your temper, you will have the bulk of the audience on your side.
- (21) Remember that, if your throat is dry, there is more relief to be got from a throat pastille than from cold water.
- (22) Finally, remember that, while all these rules are sound, it is only upon continuous practice that success in public speaking can be founded. There is more to be learnt from one's mistakes than from anything else.

New Agents

THE National Executive Committee has recently approved the following appointments:

MR. H. HODSON—as Secretary-Agent for **Reading**. Mr. Hodson, who is 51, has been a full-time agent for nine years. He comes to Reading from Ilford North.

MRS. B. ELLIOTT—as Secretary-Agent for **Darlington**. Mrs. Elliott has held various party offices during the last 13 years: for two years she was at Southern Region Office. For the past three years she has been full-time agent at Chertsey. She is 44.

MR. E. W. COLLETT—as Secretary-Agent for **Cheltenham**. Mr. Collett is 34. He has been full-time agent at Bristol South-East for the past two years.

MISS D. K. ROBBINS—as Secretary-Agent for **Carlton**. Miss Robbins was previously employed as a clerk in the National Health Service. Over the past three years she has done a great deal of party work in her spare time. She is 34.

MR. C. SHOPLAND—as Secretary-Agent for **Middlesborough**. A member of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Mr. Shopland was previously full-time agent at Warrington and then at Barry. He is 38.

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LET'S KEEP THESE MEMBERS . . .

IF it were possible to analyse the reasons for the loss of membership we should find that a high percentage was due to administrative reasons. Hundreds of members move from one constituency, ward, or local Labour Party to another, and unfortunately too few organisations have effective schemes for dealing with this problem.

The Head Office Members Transfer

Form, reproduced here, is an excellent basis for such a scheme. These can be obtained from Head Office at 6d. per 100, or 4s. per 1,000 copies.

The membership collector is obviously the best medium for this work. Members intending to remove are almost sure to warn him not to call for further subscriptions. If he carries a supply of the Transfer Forms he can ask the member

to complete one. This should then be handed to the ward or local Labour Party Secretary, who in turn will ensure that it reaches the constituency Labour Party secretary. It will then be his responsibility to forward the form to the appropriate secretary where the member is going to reside.

If, for some reason, the Secretary is in doubt as to which Constituency Labour Party the form should be forwarded, he should send it to Head Office who will be happy to act as a clearing house.

It would help even further if the collector also reminded the member about to remove of the necessity to apply for a postal vote for his old address, if entitled to do so. He could carry with him a supply of Removal Postal Vote Forms R.P.F.8 and get the member to complete one along with the Membership Transfer Form.

It is attention to all these small but very important details which enables us to maintain our membership and the Labour vote.

The form is, of course, larger than we have reproduced it here. It measures 7½ inches deep by 4¾ inches wide.

THE LABOUR PARTY Members Transfer Form

This Form is to enable a member of the Party to be transferred from one Division, Ward or Local Party to another. The member removing from one address to another is asked to complete this form and hand it to the collector or Secretary so that it can be forwarded to the appropriate Party.

Member's Name.....

Address Before Removal.....

Ward or
Constituency..... Local Party
Removing to

Ward or Local Party.....

Constituency (if known).....

To be filled in by Local Secretary (or Collector)

Date To Which Membership Paid.....

Work Done or Offices Held by Above Member:

If the removal is to another Constituency and the local Secretary there is not known please forward this Form to the National Agent, Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, S.W.1, for attention

TORY AND LABOUR PAR

AS 'Quair' did, I found *British Political Parties* a fascinating book, though, like him, I was irritated by its author's reliance upon Beatrice Webb's description of those who led the Labour Party in its early days. Her comments on party agents are typical:

There are some one hundred Parliamentary agents, most of whom I saw yesterday at a Fabian Research Department reception—old men, unkempt men, half-educated men—an inferior brand of Trade Union branch official—with no alertness and little organising ability.

The fact is that the middle-class Fabians never forgave these common working men for forming their own political party and making a success of the job!

Robert McKenzie takes much space to prove that though the Tory Leader appears to enjoy absolute authority, in reality, he can exercise it only so long as he retains the confidence of his Parliamentary colleagues, and that though Labour's Leader is elected at the beginning of each Parliamentary session and constitutionally he is simply the Chairman of the Parliamentary Party, in fact he is as powerful as the Tory Leader.

Very different

It is obvious that the status and function of the leaders of the two great parties in Britain to-day must be similar, but the likenesses should not be permitted to obscure the differences, and the parties they lead are very different from each other.

The Tory Party existed long before democratic ideas were generally accepted and represented social interests stubbornly opposed to the march of reform, though, paradoxically enough it owes its continued existence to its ability to accept the inevitable and to adapt itself, however slowly and reluctantly, to changes when once they are established.

The Labour Party had its origins in the trade unions and socialist organisations of the 19th century and these bodies had been subject to the influence of liberal

ideas when they were most powerful: democratic forms and conceptions therefore are an essential part of the life of the Labour Party.

Taking into account the history and social composition of the Tory Party it is not surprising that when a new Leader 'emerges' he exercises his authority as would a great landlord or a big businessman. He not only chooses his ministerial colleagues when Prime Minister, but he chooses also the members of the 'Shadow Cabinet' when he leads the opposition.

1922 Committee

He does not even have to contend with a regular Members' meeting, though the 1922 Committee does make the views of Tory back benchers known to him.

The Central Office is his instrument: he appoints its bosses who are responsible to him alone, and through them controls party funds and candidates.

It is true that the Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party when Prime Minister also chooses the members of his administration, but the Parliamentary Committee, the 'Shadow Cabinet', is elected by the Parliamentary Labour Party, and when in opposition the regular meetings of the Parliamentary Labour Party determine the line to be pursued in the House.

The Leader, as such, has nothing to do with funds or candidates, as these are matters for the Labour Party outside of Parliament, and it is this body which also formulates the party policy and fights elections.

Labour Members of Parliament are not dictated to by the Party outside, but they are expected to carry out party policy and a report of the activities of the Parliamentary Labour Party is contained in the Report of the National Executive Committee to the Party Conference.

Leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party in the past have held the offices of Secretary and Treasurer of the Labour Party, but they have been elected to them by the Party Conference. Mr. Attlee has contented himself with membership of the National Executive Committee which he holds ex-officio.

It must be remembered that the Labour

S DIFFER IN ESSENTIALS

Party was formed to secure the direct representation of Labour in the House of Commons, and without it there cannot be a Labour Party in Parliament at all. There was a well-organised Tory Party in Parliament which needed no national organisation outside to support it until extensions of the franchise created a mass electorate, made up mainly of working-class and lower-middle-class voters.

The National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations was formed in 1867, "as a handmaid to the Party". Its influence has grown considerably since, but its servile condition is still demonstrated by the absence of the Leader from its annual deliberations and by the fact that after its decisions have been 'conveyed' to him he can please himself what he does about them.

Cannot last

True, no Tory Leader would last long if the National Union really wanted to get rid of him, but so long as he can keep the support of his Parliamentary colleagues he has little to fear. When he no longer does that out he goes, and not a few Tory Leaders have gone in recent times, including both Austin and Neville Chamberlain.

The fact that Mr. Attlee had led the Labour Party "for a longer period than any other British politician has led a political party in this century", should not be interpreted to mean that in fact he has more real power than the Tory Leader: it is simply an indication that he regards himself as a democratic leader whose job it is to carry out the policy of the party.

When a Labour Parliamentary Leader can no longer carry out party policy he comes to the parting of the ways. Ramsay MacDonald gave up the Leadership, to become Prime Minister of a 'National' coalition, because of the fundamental disagreement between him and his colleagues about economy measures to deal with the financial crisis. George Lansbury resigned when the party committed itself to rearmament and the use of military sanctions against an aggressor. Not the Leader only, but Labour backbenchers also regard themselves as the

representatives of the party in the country, which is certainly not the way the Tory Members of Parliament regard themselves.

The old Social Democratic Federation would not endorse any of its members as Parliamentary candidates unless they had signed an application for the Chiltern Hundreds and had placed it in the hands of the Federation. The Labour Party never went to this extreme, but in its early days it did take a much narrower view of the duty of a Labour Member of Parliament than is the case to-day.

Experience, especially while in office, has taught that it is not possible to run a party in Parliament from the outside. It is now accepted that while it is the duty of the Parliamentary Labour Party to carry out the policy decided by Annual Conference, it must itself decide how best this can be done in the light of prevailing conditions.

Though theoretically it is possible for the Parliamentary Labour Party to pursue a policy fundamentally opposed to that laid down by Annual Conference, in practice this does not happen. If such a situation were conceivable it would be put right at the next General Election because:

"No person may be selected as a Parliamentary Labour candidate by a Constituency Labour Party, and no candidate may be endorsed by the National Executive Committee, if the person concerned . . . does not accept and conform to the constitution, programmes, principles and policy of the Party."

Support Policy

So only those supporting the policy of the Party would be selected to fight as Labour candidates.

Despite the author's preoccupation with the similarities of the Tory and Labour parties, his book shows how fundamentally different they are. No Socialist can pretend to understand the Tory Party if he has not read it, and by reading it he will understand the Labour Party much better as well.

A.L.W.

BRITISH POLITICAL PARTIES, by R. T. McKenzie (William Heinemann Ltd.) 30s.

Collectors are needed

THEY MUST BE FOUND

IN the last two issues we listed some of the highlights from the half-yearly reports. We deliberately focused attention on the achievements recorded, because by example we seek to encourage those parties who, looking back over the year, find that for some reason or another they have not done as well as they would have wished.

Because we see hundreds of reports we are able to get a broad picture of constituency party activity over a period.

Although no two localities have the same make-up and each area necessarily demands its own special approach to party organisation, all constituency parties work roughly on the same lines, and the reports reveal certain uniformities. What might at first seem to be a purely local condition, in fact is often common throughout the country.

Let us then take a look at some more extracts from the reports, and try to discover how it is that some parties do so much better than others.

Colchester report that towards the end of the first half of the year it became apparent that membership had declined to a very low figure. The Executive Committee agreed that a membership campaign should be launched, and as a result of this campaign some 600 members were enrolled. They also mention a very successful bazaar which brought them a profit of £140.

Aylesbury, with the assistance of the N.A.L.S.O. canvassing team, made 200 new members during one week in July.

Cheltenham, who report a fall in membership, add that this is largely due to the unsatisfactory collection in some areas. When this problem is solved they are confident that many members will be regained.

Ward meetings in **Gloucester** are not at all well attended, yet despite this, membership has increased to over 2,200 members, and contributions have reached a new record for the fifth successive year,

over £413 being received. It is remarkable that out of 221 members whom the N.A.L.S.O. team helped to recruit in September, only four have since refused to pay further contributions.

Membership at **Southampton** has remained near the previous year's record of 4,500. Of the £893 collected during 1954, £360 was retained by ward committees for their own purposes. Three more trade union branches affiliated to the party during the year and total membership, both individual and affiliated, is now in the region of 16,500. More than 130,000 circulars, letters, tickets, etc., were duplicated in the central office during 1954.

Watford report that difficulty in getting collectors has prevented any large-scale canvass drive. Existing collectors are already overburdened with other work, and efforts are constantly being made to get new collectors, including paid ones.

Clitheroe made an interesting analysis of their records regarding membership. At the end of the year they had a membership of 2,120 (a fall of 244 on the previous year). The analysis revealed that natural wastage, that is, deaths, removals, etc., is responsible for an average loss of 200 members a year, roughly 10 per cent.

Wigan can boast a fairly secure financial position. They propose transferring £450 from their General Fund to the Parliamentary account, for use when the election breaks. This still leaves approximately £700 in the General Fund and, apart from this, they have invested with the C.W.S. £1,000 at two-and-a-half per cent per annum.

Dulwich has a membership of 2,654, 1,854 men and 800 women. There is an increase in the ratio of men to women members, and this has been noted for future membership canvassing. The services of the N.A.L.S.O. canvassing team in early September was much appreciated and 500 members were enrolled. Many of these were lapsed members who rejoined. The party is of the opinion that had more time been given to organising the campaign, even better

results would have been obtained.

North Lewisham had two intensive membership campaigns during the year and made 1,125 new members, bringing their total to 4,149. They have, however, lost 671 members through removals, etc., and the net gain shown is only 454. Subscriptions have been well collected and amount to an average of just over 5s. a member.

St. Marylebone, a party with some 800 members, made a profit of £118 at their annual bazaar, and £145 on a Christmas Draw. The annual bazaar and the Christmas and Derby draws are the main means of keeping income abreast of expenditure in this constituency. This year they have set themselves a target to increase membership to 1,000.

Shoreditch and Finsbury have 1,900 members, an increase of 571 over the previous year's total. Since September some 260 members have been enrolled through organised canvassing on a party basis.

East Ham North claim to be second to none in political and social facilities offered to members, as well as service to the general public. There has been a slight fall in membership due to the fact that some wards were unable to recruit sufficient collectors and they had no organised membership campaign. This was offset by the fact that some wards by personal contact and calls actually increased the number of their collectors and in three cases, by groups of two or three members and an organised effort at odd times during the year, they added a total of 300 new members to the books. For the first time this party have achieved a 100 per cent Labour Council.

An Agents' Newsletter is published each month on the back of every ward notice. This avoids any extra cost and, at the same time, keeps all members fully informed of events.

This party claim to be a united movement, having the sort of organisation where every member can contribute to the best of his ability to the common good.

All parties have a hard core of active workers. Sometimes no more than a handful, often overworked, these people are the centre from which the growth of the local movement springs. Their aim is to spread socialism—to bring more people into the party—to increase membership.

It is obvious from the reports that new members can be found when a determined

effort is made to go out and get them. This is evidenced by the results of the good work of the N.A.L.S.O. canvassing teams and the organised membership drives conducted by local parties. But it seems that the problem of finding reliable, all-the-year-round collectors is a widespread one. It is pointless to recruit a hundred or so new members if subscriptions cannot be collected regularly.

Is this not then a matter requiring special consideration?

Reverting back to the reports, one finds that on the whole those constituencies who have been able to increase their membership have very few ailments.

On the other hand, those parties who report a declining membership also report the ensuing ills. Their income declines, they have smaller attendances at meetings, they have fewer members on whom they can call for active help. At their party meetings more and more time is taken up discussing ways and means of raising funds and less and less time is available for other matters. The meetings become monotonous and dull and so they have a falling off in attendances.

Reports from these parties almost invariably refer to 'apathy'—a word which has been grossly overworked in political circles in recent months and has a demoralising ring.

Yet, oddly enough, these parties end their reports with the firm assertion that when the election breaks there will be no shortage of helpers coming forward . . . All of which goes to show that the old spirit burns as intensively as ever beneath the cloak of 'apathy'.

Why not have an organised drive amongst existing members and try to recruit a few more collectors? The more you have the smaller the area they will have to cover and the less likely they are to be overworked.

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THE LABOUR PARTY — PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Two words make all the difference

THIS year, being an aldermanic election year for borough councils, we can expect a lot of controversy to centre on the question of aldermen in general and also on the procedure governing their election.

Where councillors are evenly divided and the election of aldermen will decide the balance of power, the question of procedure can become a major issue, being argued with great heat and perhaps to the extent of accusations of 'jiggery-pokery' being hurled across the council chamber.

Standing aside from the conflict of opinion as to whether or not the present system of aldermen is democratic, it is the issues that can arise from the wording of the section dealing with the procedure of election which can cause the bitterness. In fact, the wording is such as to permit manipulation.

Here then, are the pertinent sub-sections of Section 22 of the Local Government Act, 1933:

- (1) The ordinary election of aldermen shall be held in every third year at the annual meeting of the council, and shall take place immediately after the election of the mayor, or, if there is a sheriff, after the appointment of the sheriff.
- (2) An alderman shall not, as such, vote at the election of an alderman of the borough.
- (5) In the case of an equality of votes the person presiding at the meeting, whether or not entitled to vote in the first instance, shall have a casting vote.

At first it would appear to be quite clear—that only councillors can vote in the election of aldermen, there being an exception in the case of a casting vote. There are, however, two important words which make all the difference and enable an alderman, under certain circumstances, to give two votes and so determine not only who shall be the alderman, but decide the power on the council.

The two words in question are 'as such'—so innocently inserted in sub-section (2), '... an alderman shall not, *as such*, vote ...' Because of these two words it is possible to have a group who are in a minority of one in councillors to hold or

gain control of the council.

To quote the instance: one side on the council are in a minority of one in councillors but who, in anticipation of such a position (or perhaps quite innocently) have managed to get one of their aldermen as mayor. As the election of aldermen follows that of the mayor, he immediately signs the acceptance of office of mayor.

Alternatively, it might be that the mayor (who is an alderman) continues in the Chair, the newly-elected mayor (who is a councillor) delaying his signing of acceptance of office and voting as a councillor. Whatever the position, the right to vote as mayor is exercised—thus bringing the position to equality of votes. He then proceeds, under sub-section (5) to give a casting vote and so decides the issue.

There we have a position where it would be fair to say that the will of the majority of democratically elected councillors, and thereby the people, is ignored. It may be thought that this is a hypothetical case, but it is not so.

LEGAL PROCEDURE

There are a number of indignant letters in our file asking if such a procedure is legal. At one time there was some doubt as to whether the mayor, if an alderman, could vote in the first instance, but a case taken to the King's Bench Division following the 1938 local government elections, decided that he was.

It was held that the disqualification under Section 22(2), being to the voting of an alderman as such, did not affect the right to vote as mayor, and the election was therefore declared valid. In giving the judgment it was ruled that in a section of the Act—Section 17(2)—the mayor was described as a specific part of the council and in another section—Section 21(1)—that the aldermen of the borough shall be elected by the council from among the councillors and persons qualified to be councillors of the borough.

The last provision gives rise to yet another controversy on aldermen, one that is perhaps more familiar—should aldermen be drawn in from outside the council? On this I am not prepared to commit myself on paper other than to show you that they can.

THE PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

by L. G. SIMS

THE procedure governing the election of parish councillors differs in a number of respects from that of other local government elections. This, plus the fact that many parish elections are being contested by the Party for the first time, makes it necessary to understand what is involved.

The Parish Council Election Rules, 1952, Nos. 91 and 368, lays down the procedure and can be purchased from H.M. Stationery Office price 9d. and 2d. respectively. The latter is not really necessary so long as it is realised that the Clerk to the Rural District Council is the returning officer and has to undertake the responsibilities of the parish elections. This is understandable, of course, as Clerks to Parish Councils are either parish councillors or someone appointed by them.

The Date of the Parish Election

The date of the election is decided upon by the county council and should be announced by the end of February. It is usually the same date as that decided for the rural district elections, as this saves staff, expense and time. It is, however, necessary to check on the date at the R.D.C. office.

When the two elections are held together the same arrangements and staff cover both. In a number of cases it will be found that the same ballot boxes are used, and, where two are provided and by mischance ballot papers are placed in the wrong box, it does not invalidate the papers as they must be of a different colour and are thereby easily distinguished.

The Notice of Election

This Notice is published by the Clerk to the Rural District Council. It must be displayed in some conspicuous place on or near the principal door of each church or chapel in the village, and other places in the area as thought necessary.

Care should be taken to note the date

on this Notice of Election, as it is the one to be entered in the nomination paper. The place, date and times for delivery of the nomination papers are also stated.

The Candidate

The candidate is responsible for the conduct of his election, including the Return of Election Expenses, as election agents are not required. It is wise, therefore, to ensure that no person other than the candidate incurs expense.

For instance, if there is to be central printing of election addresses, etc., it will be the candidate who places the order with the person responsible for its production. Where an expense has been incurred at the request of a candidate, a correct return must be submitted to him within 23 days of the declaration of the result of the election.

Nomination

The nomination papers (and form of consent, etc.) can usually be obtained at the R.D.C. offices. The top portion of the nomination paper must be filled in with the same care as that for other elections (dealt with in our March issue). Do not, for instance, leave out the full names of the candidate or omit the village in which he resides.

As the nomination papers need only proposers and seconder there should be little difficulty in getting a number filled in and submitted. As all parish councillors retire together, the question of subscribing a nomination paper is important. A person cannot subscribe more nomination papers than there are vacancies to be filled. If there are 10 seats to be filled and we are contesting all 10, then a person could sign one nomination paper for each of the 10 candidates—but not more than one for each. It is wise, of course, to get separate signatures in each case.

In the event of there not being sufficient valid nominations to fill the vacancies, those so nominated will be declared elected. The remaining vacancies will be filled by those retiring councillors who were highest in the poll at the previous election, or, if there was no poll, by means of a lot under the direction of the return-

ing officer. It has been known for parish councillors to be returned without a nomination paper being delivered.

Polling Hours and Extension of Poll

The hours of poll are decided by the county council and in most cases are from noon until 8.0 p.m. or to coincide with the R.D.C. poll. Enquiry should be made at the R.D.C. offices so as to avoid giving wrong information on this important matter.

The hours of poll can be extended from 8.0 p.m. until 9.0 p.m. in all elections if application is made. Again, because of the number of vacancies, it is necessary to note that the rule states that the number of applications for the extension must be not less than the number of vacancies—if there are 10 vacancies there must be 10 candidates' applications.

Polling and Counting Agents

Bearing in mind the number of candidates that could be nominated, the returning officer has to decide on the allocation of polling and counting agents and notify the candidates.

The notice of appointment must then be given in writing by candidate not later than the third day before the day of election. Full names and addresses are required.

The wives or husbands of the candidates can attend the count but cannot participate unless appointed as a counting agent. The candidate has the same rights as that of his polling and counting agents.

Following the Poll

As with all elections, there are important items to be considered immediately following the election. The period of time in which to complete the procedure is less in the case of parish elections, and prompt attention is therefore necessary.

The procedure is not complicated and 'Reminders' have been sent to all Local Parties as well as being fully dealt with in our 'Conduct of Local Elections'.

Claims and Payments

All claims in respect of the election must be received by the candidate within 14 days, including his own personal expenses, if any.

In the case of payments these must be made within 21 days as against 28 in

other local government elections.

Declaration and Return of Election Expenses

The Return and Declaration of Election Expenses must be transmitted to the Clerk of the R.D.C. within 28 days of the declaration of the result of the poll. It is not necessary for the Declaration to be witnessed by a Justice of the Peace as in other elections.

Care must be taken to allocate the costs over each candidate, especially in respect of such items as joint election addresses, committee rooms, meetings, etc. Where the rural and parish elections are contested together it will mean apportioning the cost over each election and then over the candidates.

Where bills and receipts cover a number of candidates, each return will be based on the allocation of cost. To avoid confusion, send all the returns in together, attaching invoices and receipts to the top return and cross-referencing them. All amounts of 20s. or over must be accounted for by a receipt.

Legal Maximum Expenditure

The legal maximum of a candidate contesting on his own is £25, and, if the number of local government electors exceeds 500, an additional 2d. for all over that number. If two candidates run together the maximum is reduced by one-quarter, and, in the case of more than two, by one-third.

Remember that 'Y' voters are not included as they are not entitled to vote until 2nd October.

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**THE LABOUR PARTY . . . TRANSPORT HOUSE
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TORIES ARE LIKE MOLES

I'M a Berkshire man, born and bred within seven miles of 'The Rose' at Wokingham. "Moles," grandad used to say, "are like Tories, they take a lot of shifting once they've settled." For nearly thirty years, grandfather—*Old Mole-catcher Tom*—knelt in the fields of these parts to set his traps, and rarely did he fail to account for less than 3,000 moles or more in a season.

"It's bank, hedge and ditch country," said grandad, when a black-coated gentleman from *the smoke* asked him about the physical aspects of the district—"heath and firlands, grass, arable, woodlands, deep blind ditches, and bad old foxes." To-day, thanks to Boundary Commissioners and a Tory Government, Wokingham Constituency also includes a fair portion of the eastern suburbs of Reading and the swiftly-growing new town of Bracknell.

Wokingham Constituency Labour Party first came into being in 1949 with a membership of 284. At the end of 1954, membership just exceeded a thousand, organised in Wokingham and Bracknell and in lovely villages with rich countryside-sounding names like Arborfield, Owlsmoor, Spencers Wood and Winnersh. At the last General Election the Conservative majority was 11,046, but it will not be for want of trying if Labour does not soon win this Constituency.

Through 1954, in fair weather and foul, canvass teams have gone out into the villages to build up a marked register. With Helen McCarthy, Education and Propaganda Officer, at the helm, Party education has not been neglected. There have been Conferences on Comprehensive Schools, German Rearmament, Foreign Policy, Brains Trusts organised in half-a-dozen village, and classes at Wokingham Town Hall for election workers.

Wokingham folk will have you believe that their town is a place of ancient piety. History exposes this deceit. There was,

for instance, the little matter of the Wokingham Blacks, a local secret society. Its members, with Commando-like blackened faces, had one delight, poaching the King's deer. Most of its members finished up on the gibbet. My forebears regularly attended the bull-baiting in Wokingham market place and got locked in Reading jail for their pains.

The other evening I revisited Wokingham to officiate at the 'wedding' of the eastern suburbs of Reading with the Wokingham Constituency—all part of one of the many engagements created by the Boundary Commissioners for members of the Regional staff. First there was an annual Meeting of the old Wokingham Constituency Labour Party. The Annual Report presented by Hon. Secretary Fred Furber was full of encouragement and indicated a cash balance of £180.

It is an old Berkshire custom to celebrate birthdays and christenings with large helpings of rabbit pie washed down by a draught of parsnip wine. Alas, myxomatosis and the march of time have wrought sad changes, so we commemorated a successful year of Party activity and welcomed new friends from east Reading at a supper of hamburgers, peas and coffee, and we listened to a fine speech from 24-years-old Prospective Labour Candidate, Flying Officer Terry Boston. Terry is one of the bright young men of the Labour Movement. He joined the League of Youth when he was 16 years of age. To-day he is Chairman of the Labour Society at Kings College. In addition, he finds time for archery, shooting, serious music and courting. He is engaged to be married to the daughter of Douglas Duff of 'What's My Line?' fame.

Late in the evening, the new Wokingham Party was constituted in accordance with Conference decisions. It came as no surprise when Fred Furber was elected as Secretary.

Near to Wokingham, in some of the most beautiful countryside of the Thames Valley, is Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic

Asylum. It is here that Fred Furber earns his living, but Fred regards his job at Broadmoor as a vocation. His one recreation is serving the Labour Party. In the shadow of this grim institution, Fred works indefatigably for Socialism. "We have nothing to lose," says Fred, "but the Tories."

It is April and time you folk from *up the smoke* came down to visit Berkshire. This is a land of Toad Hall, the country of *Wind in the Willows*, where Mole, Ratty and Badger go about their lawful business and Labour Parties have been established in almost every village. You will find the countryside white with cherry blossom, white and purple spotted fritillaries in the Lodden Valley, violets and primroses in the woods. You will find moles in the fields and twenty-thousand Tories in the homesteads, and as grandad used to say, "they take a lot of shifting once they've settled."

Southern

F. SHEPHERD

Spade Work

DURING the last few months we have had a lot of work to do in connection with the Redistribution of Parliamentary constituencies.

We have had this kind of thing twice before and each time it was detrimental to our interests. This time it seems that when it's all ended we shall be neither bettered nor worsened. It is a lot of work for nothing and I belong to those who favour a seven-yearly review! It will be often enough, especially when it is realised that some parties have already had big changes in their organisation and personnel three times over.

This time we had to create three new Constituency Labour Parties; effect major alterations in six others; and make minor adjustments in seven more.

If one pauses to think what this means in terms of arranging and attending numerous meetings; selecting and reselecting Prospective Parliamentary Candidates; resettling full-time agents; securing new officers; drafting and piloting insertions to rules; making financial and property adjustments; and effecting numerous minor adjustments of one kind and another, one realises the tremendous amount of extra work entailed.

Thank heavens we have nearly completed all this business, for it is a time which not only taxes a man's energy but tries his patience as well!

We have also been fully engaged in work connected with the County Council Elections.

Some of our Federations of Labour Parties have done a grand job, drafting programmes and preparing notes for speakers and canvassers; and in these areas no one need go forward without being able to tell the electors what it is all about.

We are running more (48) candidates this time: 7 more in Bedfordshire; 15 more in Essex, where we are striving to maintain control; 3 more in Hertfordshire; 6 more in Norfolk; 14 more in Suffolk; 3 in the Isle of Ely. It seems there will be no change in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

Well, all this adds up to a good effort. What will be the result? I am not given to prophesying election results, and when I do break my silence I'm afraid I stand on the cautious side. This time, however, I will hazard a guess that at the end of the day we shall hold more County Council seats throughout the region than ever before.

If this turns out to be true it should help us in the General Election. If it turns out to be false then the work done will stand as a positive contribution to our cause.

There have been many social events of one kind and another in this region during the last few months.

The most impressive was the dinner at Chelmsford at which Charles Leatherland and Tony Greenwood were the main speakers. About one hundred members from all parts of the constituency were present.

They chose this kind of gathering to launch their County Council Election Campaign. The candidates and their agents were introduced by the prospective Parliamentary candidate and the whole affair was conducted in an atmosphere of fellowship which made us all feel that we were crusaders in the same old fight, but in a new way. Jolly good!

Bury St. Edmunds have arranged what they call Supper Meetings during the last two years. You pay your money. You have a good feed. You listen to speeches. You

ish up by enjoying the social entertainment of your choice.

These events have been remarkably helpful, especially at a time when it has been difficult to secure large audiences at village meetings. There has been an average of one hundred members. The prospective Parliamentary candidate attended them all and this gave him a great opportunity to fraternise with the members and to feel the pulse of the hard-working parties in remote rural areas. Moreover, each of these Supper Meetings paid for itself.

Last Saturday Dick Crossman was the chief speaker at the Bury meeting. There were over one hundred there and it was a suitable function at which to launch their *Forward to Victory* campaign.

I was also privileged to speak at the Suffolk N.U.A.W. dinner at Saxmundham in the heart of the straggling Eye constituency. There were two hundred there. Men and women—the majority of them in the prime of life—foregathered from many parts of the county. It was good to be there and fine to realise that organised labour on the countryside has progressed considerably in recent times.

Of the labourer Edwin Markham the poet says:

*"Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the
world."*

The agricultural worker no longer answers to this dire and distressing description. He has become emancipated. He stands erect. He steps out confidently and courageously with his comrades in the industrial field to obtain a progressively higher standard of life for himself and his family, and he realises that this can only be done through the Labour Party.

Eastern

W. T. YOUNG

Serious position

NO, this is not just another write-up about the postal vote. Indeed, it is a comment on a rather serious position.

For a considerable time we have been urging our party agents to go along to the Electoral Registration Officer, and either obtain a list from him of postal voters, or to copy the names from his cards.

Recently, in Somerset, one of our agents did this, and was in the course of copying the names and addresses from the Registration Officer's postal vote records, when he discovered that on a large number of applications the only qualification was 'Housewife', and on others, 'Company director', 'Master builder', etc. Apparently, on these applications, the electors had been listed as postal voters.

The agent raised an objection to the Registration Officer regarding people being granted postal votes on these qualifications, and as a result the Home Office was informed.

The Home Office contacted the County Electoral Registration Officer, who in turn called a meeting of his Deputy Registration Officers, and the whole question of postal vote applications in the constituency concerned is being tightened up.

Our agent objected to 136 applications, and his objection to a large majority of the applications was sustained. I understand they will now be deleted from the list. It is safe to say that of the applications disallowed, they would have been overwhelmingly Tory votes.

The Electoral Registration Officer is now writing to all people on his postal voters' list, ascertaining whether they still wish to maintain their claim to a postal vote.

If this sort of thing is happening in a number of constituencies it is sufficient to lose us many marginal seats at the General Election. It is, therefore, vitally important that every agent should examine the Electoral Registration Officers' lists of postal voters, check the qualifications, and to raise objections wherever it is thought necessary.

South Western

E. V. REES

QUOTE L99777

THE Labour Party now has a Co-operative Society Trading Number. By occasionally quoting L99777 when purchasing at Co-ops in the national membership scheme, individual members and affiliated organisations can help the Party's national funds.

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